Did Nixon Hamper Meier's Immigration?

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OTTAWA (UPI) — Conservative member of Parliament John Reynolds demanded to know Wednesday if former Howard Hughes employe John Meier's application for landed immigrant status in Canada was being delayed at President Richard Nixon's request.

Meier, reportedly a possible key witness in the Watergate investigations, arrived in Canada in August, 1972, and immediately applied for landed immigrant status through the Immigration Department's Vancouver offices.

Charges of income tax evasion were brought against him by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) last summer and there has still been no decision on his application for landed immigrant status.

Reynolds placed a series of 13 questions on the House of Commons order paper Wednesday for replies by Immigration Minister Robert Andras at a later date.

One of the questions read

"Is the minister, or anyone in his department, holding up the landed immigrant status of John Meier at the request of President Richard Nixon?"

Reynolds first raised the Meier case in the House of Commons Tuesday, questioning Andras over the fact "internal information and documents" from the Canadian Immigration Intelligence Service had gotten into the hands of the U.S. Attorney General's office.

Andras confirmed Tuesday that "confidential" information had been passed on by the IRS "in error" and without Canada's permission to a lawyer representing Meier.

Wednesday, however, under further questioning by Reynolds, the minister acknowledged this reply was inaccurate. Reynolds later told newsmen that what actually happed was that the material went from the IRS to the U.S. Attorney General.

It was only when charges were brought against Meier, Reynolds said, that the cocuments were given to Meier's attorney due to laws requiring that documents involved in a prosecution be handed over to the defense.

Reynolds told newsmen Wednesday he was concerned as much by the way in which the documents were handled as he was by the Meier case itself. "It may happen to me next, or to you," he said.

Andras, however, told the House exchange of information in immigration cases were "routine," "customary" and "legitimate." He stressed again, as he did Tuesday, the documents were handed on in error by the IRS and that they had apologized.

Meier reportedly has been questioned by the Watergate investigators over allegations that Hughes agents provided $100,000 to Nixon's 1968 campaign.

Most of Reynolds' series of written questions concerned clarification of his allegation in the House Tuesday that Meier was being followed in Canada by agents of a security outfit called Intertel.

The firm provides bodyguards and other security personnel for the Hughes organization, including gambling concerns in Las Vegas and the Bahamas.

In his questions, Reynolds mentioned a number of alleged contacts between Intertel personnel and Meier in Canada, including a serving of legal papers related to a Hughes suit against Meier and others.

Reynolds said the papers were served on Immigration Department property, an immigration office in Vancouver, he believed.

Meier is one of those named in a multimillion-dollar suit filed by Hughes Tool Co., in Salt Lake City over transactions involving mining rights in Nevada during 1968 and 1969, the same period to which the IRS charges relate.

The written questions raised even more complicated issues, including possible surveillance of Meier by an Intertel agent employed at the same time by the Immigration Department.